Yateley Town Council

Minutes of the Town Council on Monday, 14 September 2026, 7.00pm
held at The Oak Room, Council Offices, Reading Road, Yateley, GU46 7RP

Present – Councillors:
Cllr Graham Cockarill (Chairman)
Cllr Stuart Bailey
Cllr Alex Drage
Cllr Gerry Crisp
Cllr Mark Griffin
Cllr Pam Phelps-Jones
Cllr Tony Spencer
Cllr Mark Vernon
Cllr Julia Wedlock

Absent Councillors
Cllr Greg Easterbrook
Cllr Bob Harward
Cllr Mark Higgins

In Attendance – Officers, District & County Councillors and Public
2 co-option candidates, 2 representatives from Gig on the Green
Julie Routley (Town Clerk)

C6722 Welcome & Apologies for Absence

Cllr Cockarill welcomed everyone to the meeting.
Apologies had been received from Cllrs Easterbrook, Harward and Higgins.

C6723 Approval of Absence from Meetings

Members considered whether to approve a further period of absence from meetings for Councillor Harward in accordance with Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972

It was **RESOLVED** that, pursuant to Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, Councillor Harward's absence from meetings be approved until 14 March 2027.

C6724 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Spencer declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item C6727, *Gig on the Green*, and advised, for reasons of transparency, that he undertakes photography for the event and receives a complimentary ticket in return.

C6725 Minutes of the Last Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2026.
The Chairman duly signed the minutes as an accurate record.

Chair.....

C6726 Public Participation

No public were present.

C6727 Gig on the Green

i) Update from the Gig on the Green Group

The Council received an update from the Gig on the Green organisers. The two Co-Chairs advised that 2026 was their first year leading the event and that, whilst successful, a number of lessons had been learnt which they hoped to implement for future events. The event raised approximately £35,000 and continued its support for local charities through the provision of free pitches. Members noted the significant contribution made by the volunteer organising committee and the many volunteers who supported the event over the weekend, recognising that Gig on the Green is a major community-led event.

ii) Permission for Use of Yateley Town Council Facilities

Members noted that the equivalent value of Yateley Town Council's support through the provision of Yateley Green and associated Council facilities is £1,455 and that the Council has historically provided these facilities free of charge in recognition of the benefits the event brings to the local community.

Members further noted the additional cleaning required following the 2026 event and the damage caused to a drawbar gate on Yateley Green, the costs of which exceeded the retained damage deposit.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

a) Grant permission for the use of Yateley Green and associated Council facilities for Gig on the Green 2027, subject to the usual event management, licensing and safety requirements.

b) Introduce a £50 cleaning charge for future Gig on the Green events.

c) Increase the event damage deposit from £100 to £250.

The organisers are required to acknowledge the support of Yateley Town Council in all publicity and promotional material associated with Gig on the Green, in accordance with the Council's usual requirements for events receiving Council support.

Members also noted that the organisers had been advised of their responsibilities under the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law) and would be responsible for ensuring compliance with any applicable legal requirements.

At 7.38pm 2 representatives from Gig on the Green left the meeting

C6728 District & County Reports

County

Apologies were received from Cllr Quarterman (HCC), but he had circulated a written report prior to the meeting.

Chair.....

Cllr Bailey (HCC)

Land Behind Hearsay Gardens HCCllr Bailey reported on concerns relating to land behind Hearsay Gardens, where extensive tree and vegetation clearance works had been undertaken and large vehicles had been accessing the site via the residential estate. It was noted that the land had been divided into individual plots for sale, giving rise to concerns amongst local residents regarding the future use of the site. Similar concerns had previously been raised in relation to other land in the Darby Green Road area.

Members were advised that Hart District Council can only intervene where there is evidence of a planning breach. It was reported that aggregate had been brought onto the site and that concerns raised by residents had been referred to both Yateley Town Council and Hart District Council. Hart District Council subsequently issued a Temporary Stop Notice, which had halted certain activities on the land whilst further investigations were undertaken.

HCCllr Bailey advised that, to his knowledge, no further works had taken place on the site since the Temporary Stop Notice was issued, other than the removal of vegetation. It was also noted that the trees affected were not subject to Tree Preservation Orders and the site was not designated as ancient woodland.

New No. 8 Stagecoach Bus Service The County Councillor reported that the new No. 8 Stagecoach bus service had experienced some initial teething problems. It was noted that the service, which extends the previous route to include Farnborough Station, now operates every 30 minutes. Passenger demand had been particularly strong on morning services, and residents were encouraged to support the continued operation of the route through regular use.

Local Government Reorganisation

The County Councillor reported that the Government had recently withdrawn proposals for local government reorganisation affecting Hampshire and a number of other areas. He advised that, despite this decision, further proposals for local government reorganisation were anticipated in due course.

Members were advised that the position regarding future electoral arrangements remained uncertain. Concern was expressed that any future proposals could involve a larger unitary authority area than had previously been suggested. The County Councillor noted that there was currently little certainty regarding the Government's next steps and that the situation would continue to be monitored.

District

Cllr Cockarill (HDC)

Local Government Reorganisation HDCllr Cockarill reported that work relating to local government reorganisation at Hart District Council had ceased following the Government's decision not to proceed with the proposals. It was noted that a significant amount of officer time and resources had already been committed to the process. Members were advised that, as a consequence, there remained uncertainty regarding the future structure of local government in the area. HDCllr Cockarill further reported that District Council elections were now expected to take place in May 2027.

Chair.....

26/00145/OUT - Firgrove Farm, Firgrove Road, Eversley, Hook RG27 0PE This application will be considered by Hart District Council's Development Management Committee on 16th September at 7pm. Members of this Council can attend as a Councillor.

Local Plan Members were advised that the next stage of consultation on the Local Plan was expected to commence in mid-October. It was noted that Yateley Town Council would be invited to submit its views as part of the consultation process.

C6729 Clerk's Report

Members noted the Town Clerk's report.

C6730 i) External Audit Conclusion Report 2025/26

Members received and noted the External Auditor's Report and Certificate for the financial year ended 31 March 2026. It was noted that the external audit had been completed with no issues, recommendations or matters of concern identified by the External Auditor. Members further noted that the Notice of Conclusion of Audit and associated documents had been published on the Council's website on 20 August 2026.

The Town Clerk and her team were thanked for their work in achieving a successful audit outcome.

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and approve the External Audit Conclusion Report and audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2025/26.

ii) Internal Auditor Arrangements

It was **NOTED** that Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd had been appointed as the Council's independent Internal Auditor under a three-year contract covering the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029. Members further noted that the Council's Internal Auditor is independent of the Council and provides an objective review of the effectiveness of the Council's systems of internal control, governance and risk management.

C6731 Yateley Green Pond Habitat Improvement Works

Members considered a report regarding specialist aquatic management and habitat improvement works at Yateley Green Pond. The proposed works include the removal of excessive aquatic vegetation, management of willow growth, fish removal and rehoming, and associated habitat restoration measures to support the pond's long-term management as a dedicated wildlife habitat.

Members noted that the quotation submitted by Aquamaintain Ltd was £18,600 plus VAT and that no budget provision currently exists for the works, with the expenditure to be met from the Council's General Reserve.

Members further noted that the works needed to be undertaken during the autumn period and that any delay in progressing the project could impact the ability to complete the works within the preferred seasonal window.

Chair.....

Members noted that the works are highly specialist in nature, requiring specialist aquatic management equipment, fisheries expertise, licensed waste handling and the obtaining of any necessary regulatory consents. Members were advised that, in accordance with Financial Regulations 5.12 and 5.13, the requirement to obtain multiple quotations does not apply to specialist services, provided the reasons are recorded. Members were satisfied that the proposed works constituted specialist aquatic and fisheries management services and that Aquamaintain Ltd was an appropriate specialist contractor to undertake the works. It was further noted that, as part of the project, fish would be removed from the pond and rehomed using specialist fisheries techniques, subject to the necessary regulatory approvals

It was **RESOLVED** that:

a) The aquatic management and habitat improvement works at Yateley Green Pond be approved.

b) In accordance with Financial Regulations 5.12 and 5.13, the Council accepts that the works comprise specialist aquatic and fisheries management services and that obtaining multiple quotations is not required.

c) Aquamaintain Ltd be appointed to undertake the Yateley Green Pond Habitat Improvement Works at a cost of £18,600 plus VAT.

d) The expenditure be funded from the Council's General Reserve.

Members noted that no significant pond management works had been undertaken since 2016 and that periodic maintenance of aquatic vegetation is likely to be required in future to maintain the pond's ecological condition.

C6732 Council Meeting Venues

Members considered the advantages and disadvantages of holding Full Council meetings solely at the Council Offices or sharing meetings between the Council Offices and the Darby Green Centre.

Members agreed that it was important for the Council to maintain a visible presence across all parts of the parish and that holding some meetings at the Darby Green Centre would help demonstrate the Council's commitment to serving the wider community.

It was **RESOLVED** that a trial arrangement be introduced until the end of the 2026/27 civic year, with the Full Council meetings scheduled for **7 December 2026** and **1 March 2027** to be held at the Darby Green Centre, with all other meetings remaining at the Council Offices.

It was further agreed that the venue for each meeting should be clearly publicised on meeting agendas and through the Council's social media channels to minimise the risk of confusion.

Chair.....

C6733 Yateley Common Management Committee Meetings

Members reviewed the Chair and Vice-Chair arrangements for the Council's representatives on the Yateley Common Management Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Spencer would act as substitute for Cllr Harward, the Chair, when required and that Cllr Phelps-Jones would serve as Vice-Chair of the Committee.

C6734 Review of Standing Orders

This item was deferred to the next meeting as further information was required.

C6735 Data Protection Review

Members received and considered the Data Protection Health Check Report prepared by Breakthrough Communications, the updated Data Audit, the proposed Data Breach Policy and the Data Protection Guidance for Councillors and Staff.

Members welcomed the independent review of the Council's data protection arrangements and noted the importance of maintaining high standards of data protection, information governance and compliance with the requirements of the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Members supported the continued review and development of policies, procedures and guidance to ensure ongoing compliance and best practice. It was further noted that it would be beneficial for councillors to formally confirm that they had read and understood the Council's data protection policies and guidance.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

i) the findings and recommendations contained within the Data Protection Health Check Report be noted;

ii) the updated Data Audit be noted;

iii) the Data Breach Policy be adopted; and

iv) the Data Protection Guidance for Councillors and Staff be approved.

C6736 Town Mayor's Announcements

Since the last meeting, the Mayor or Deputy Mayor had attended the following events:

- Yateley 10K Road Races – 1 July & 5 August 2026
- Hampshire Lakes 10th Anniversary – 16 June
- Yateley Industries Summer Fete – 20 June
- Yateley and Eversley Air Cadets AGM – 22 June
- Gig on the Green – 27 June
- 'Shout' and 'The Mix' Fundraiser Suicide Awareness – 27 June
- Gayton House, Community Leaders Evening – 7 July

C6737 Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies & Local Updates

Cllr Wedlock -

Hampshire Bus Action Group (HAMBAG)

Cllr Wedlock reported that they were unable to attend the latest Hampshire Bus Action Group (HAMBAG) meeting taking place this evening.

Chair.....

It was noted that HAMBAG continues to make progress, with seven town and parish councils, together with Hampshire County Councillor Quarterman, having pledged their support. Once ten councils have endorsed the group, HAMBAG intends to contact all Hampshire town and parish councils seeking their endorsement and inviting them to provide a brief summary of local bus service provision and issues within their communities.
It was further noted that HAMBAG has launched a website to support its campaigning and engagement activities.
The group has considered the Government's recent work on bus services but believes a more ambitious approach is required. Priorities include addressing "bus deserts" where public transport provision is limited or absent, achieving a more rapid reduction in bus emissions, improving fare affordability for young people, and promoting a bus network that reduces dependence on private car travel.
It was noted that much of the work is being undertaken by a relatively small number of committed volunteers, but that the group continues to make positive progress and remains committed to achieving its objectives.

Cllr Wedlock -
Yelabus
Cllr Wedlock will be attending the next Yelabus meeting tomorrow.
It was noted that a key issue for the organisation is securing grant funding towards the purchase of a new bus, with concerns that the anticipated grant support may not materialise.
It was further noted that there was disappointment that the newly introduced Eversley Shopper service has not attracted the level of usage that had been hoped for.

C6738 Police Matters & Community Safety

Members noted that the individual responsible for the recent graffiti incidents had been identified and that action had been taken by the relevant authorities.
Members were further advised that the next Police Liaison Meeting will take place on 28 September at 11.00am.

C6739 Committee Minutes & Recommendations from Other Committees

The minutes from the following Committees and Working Parties were noted:

Committee	Date	Minute Nos.	Recommendations
Community & Environment	20.07.26	1902-1909	
Finance & Policy	15.06.26 06.07.26	2189-2198 2199-2211	
Personnel	Has not met		
Planning & Licensing	15.06.26 06.07.26 20.07.26 17.08.26 07.09.26	3442-3451 3452-3459 3460-3467 3468-3475 3476-3483	

Chair.....

C6740 Schedule of Accounts

It was **RESOLVED** to approve:
The list of payments emailed to the Committee prior to the meeting:

Pages 2121-23 are September invoices

Cash Book –

Deposit refunds –

£100.00 - 07/09 – Antiques Collectables
£100.00 - 07/09 – GM
£100.00 - 07/09 - Babybeats
£100.00 - 07/09 - LC

September Salaries

Salaries - £15,860.89 (includes back pay for pay rise)
Tax & NI - £6,234.29
Hampshire Pension Scheme - £4,743.85

C6741 Information Items

i) Local Council Award Scheme - Gold Accreditation
Members noted that Yateley Town Council had been awarded Gold Accreditation under the National Association of Local Councils' Local Council Award Scheme in August 2026. The Gold Award is the highest level of accreditation available and recognises excellence in governance, community leadership, service delivery and continuous improvement. Members further noted that Yateley Town Council is only the second town or parish council in Hampshire to achieve this status. The accreditation is valid for a period of four years, with the Council retaining Gold status until August 2030.
The Mayor highlighted the significant work that had been undertaken to secure the accreditation and the importance of the achievement for the Council. Members expressed their appreciation to the Town Clerk and her team for their dedication and hard work throughout the accreditation process and recognised the collective contribution of councillors and officers in achieving this prestigious award.

i) Date of next meeting – 2 November 2026, 7.00pm at The Oak Room, Council Offices.

ii) Forward Plan
The items on the Forward Plan were noted. It was noted that the Full Council Meetings taking place on 7th December 2026 and 1st March 2026 would take place at the Darby Green Centre.

C6742 Co-Option to fill a Casual Vacancy

The Mayor welcomed the candidates and outlined the co-option process.
Each candidate was invited to address Members for up to three minutes, outlining their reasons for seeking co-option to the Council. Members then put the same questions to each candidate.

Following consideration of the applications and presentations, Members voted on the appointment.

Chair.....

It was **RESOLVED** by majority vote that Christina Wilkin be co-opted to Yateley Town Council to fill the casual vacancy and serve until the next ordinary elections in May 2027.

It was noted that Cllr Wilkin signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and was welcomed to the Council by the Mayor and Members.

The Mayor thanked both candidates for their interest in serving the community and for participating in the co-option process.

Meeting closed at 9.10pm

Chair.....